

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ABF-01 DODE-00 AID-05

SS-15 EB-07 MMS-04 PER-03 A-01 FSE-00 OC-05 CCO-00

OPR-02 SSO-00 /054 W

----- 021020

O R 241220Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 325

INFO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 JIDDA 1312

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, AFSP

SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICING OF JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION

SUMMARY: EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICING OF JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION BE FURNISHED BY EMBASSY UNDER SHARED ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AGREEMENT CONCEPTS. ADVANTAGES ARE THAT LOWER PROFILE FOR COMMISSION CAN BE MAINTAINED IN RIYADH AND EXPERIENCED IN-COUNTRY BACKSTOPPING WOULD BE AVAILABLE. END SUMMARY

1. DURING LAST ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS IN RIYADH OF US-SAUDI JOINT COMMISSION STAFFING, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT SAUDI SIDE WISHED TO LIMIT NUMBER OF AMERICANS IN CAPITAL. DR. SOLAIM HAS SINCE ONCE AGAIN MENTIONED FINDING HOUSING FOR SUCH AMERICANS AS A MAJOR PROBLEM. THERE IS NO NEED, THE DOCTOR SAID, FOR ANY TO ARRIVE UNTIL WE CAN FIND HOUSING.

2. ALTHOUGH MAJOR LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR JOINT COMMISSION MIGHT BE OBTAINED UNDER CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS, EITHER WITH PRIVATE CONTRACTORS OR CORPS OF ENGINEERS, EMBASSY HAS CLEAR CONCEPTION, WHICH WASHINGTON AGENCIES PERHAPS DO NOT HAVE, OF THE EXTRAORDINARY ADMINISTRATIVE BACK-STOPPING NECESSARY IN SAUDI ARABIA. IN RIYADH PARTICULARLY, THERE ARE TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULTIES, NO READILY OBTAINABLE

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HOUSING OR TEMPORARY LODGINGS (DURING RECENT COINCIDING

VISITS OF THE SECRETARY, UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON AND PARTY, AND CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE, EMBASSY WAS UNABLE TO LOCATE ONE RPT ONE HOTEL ROOM FOR EMBASSY STAFF AND ADVANCE TEAMS), AND DEARTH OF OTHER SUPPORT FACILITIES AND AMENITIES. EVEN IF SERVICES ARE PERFORMED CONTRACTUALLY, THERE WILL BE NEED OF SOME ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF TO DIRECT, MONITOR AND FOLLOW-UP ON THESE EFFORTS. THE EMBASSY, IN ANY EVENT, WILL BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE SUPPORT IN SUCH AREAS AS TELECOMMUNICATIONS, APO MAIL AND POUCH, CUSTOMS CLEARANCES, ACCOMMODATION EXCHANGE, COMMISSARY, ETC. UNIQUE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS OF COMMISSION WILL ALSO REQUIRE CHANNELING TRUST FUND DEPOSITS THROUGH EMBASSY TO U.S. DISBURSING OFFICER.

3. EMBASSY HAS AVAILABLE AN ADMINISTRATIVE COUNSELOR WHOSE EXPERIENCE INCLUDES SETTING-UP ADMINISTRATIVE MECHANISMS WITH MINIMUM OF PERSONNEL FOR AID-TYPE MISSIONS IN AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE. SIMILAR CONCEPTS FOLLOWED HERE FREE THE U.S. COORDINATOR FROM MOST OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS AND WOULD PERMIT HIM DEVOTE MORE ATTENTION TO SUBSTANTIVE PROGRAM MATTERS. (RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH UNREGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE MAKE CLEAR THAT WITHOUT ADEQUATE AND EXPERIENCED ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, SUBSTANTIVE PERSONNEL END UP SPENDING MORE TIME ON ADMINISTRATIVE CHORES THAN ON THE PROGRAM WORK THEY SENT HERE TO PERFORM.) ADMINISTRATIVE COUNSELOR WAYNE SWEDENBURG HAS SERVED IN DUAL CAPACITY AS STATE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER AND AID EXECUTIVE OFFICER UNDER CAMO OR JAS ARRANGEMENTS AT FOUR POSTS WHERE CENTRAL ORGANIZATION PROVIDED ACROSS-THE-BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO ALL U.S. AGENCIES OPERATING IN-COUNTRY. WE RECOMMEND THAT HE BE GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR ESTABLISHING SIMILAR WORKING ARRANGEMENTS HERE AND THAT HE DIRECT EFFORTS OF FOLLOWING LISTED ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF.

4. SINCE COMMISSION BEING FUNDED UNDER TRUST FUND ARRANGEMENT, EARLY ARRIVAL OF USAID-TYPE CONTROLLER, WHO CAN SET UP BOOKS AND TRAIN LOCAL STAFF, IS ESSENTIAL. PRESENT EMBASSY BUDGET AND FISCAL OFFICER JOHN JELICH HAS HAD SOME EXPERIENCE WITH TRUST FUND DEPOSITS AND ACCOUNTING

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PROCEDURES, AND COULD PROBABLY HANDLE THIS REPORTING INITIALLY. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE FAR BETTER TO HAVE AN EXPERIENCED CONTROLLER ARRIVE ON SCENE BEFORE THAT OF OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE OR PROGRAM PERSONNEL. WE ASSUME THAT TRUST FUND DEPOSITS WILL BE CHanneled THROUGH USDO PARIS, MUCH AS THAT OFFICER HANDLES SIMILAR DEPOSITS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES SERVICED BY HIS OFFICE. OTHER ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE FOR ASSIGNMENT FULL-TIME USDO TO

EMBASSY.

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SS-15 EB-07 MMS-04 PER-03 A-01 FSE-00 OC-05 CCO-00

OPR-02 SSO-00 /054 W

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5. IN ADDITION TO CONTROLLER, EARLY ARRIVAL OF TWO FULLY-EXPERIENCED ADMINISTRATIVE OR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS WHOSE BACKGROUNDS INCLUDE WORKING IN ALL FACETS OF GENERAL SERVICES ACTIVITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WILL BE REQUIRED. THESE TWO INDIVIDUALS MUST BE ADAPTABLE AND OF THE CAN-DO TYPE. THEIR DUTIES WILL BE OF SHIRT-SLEEVES NATURE AND WILL NOT INCLUDE THE COMFORTS OF SITTING BEHIND A DESK. THEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND THIS BEFORE OFFER OF AN ASSIGNMENT IS MADE. WE WILL REQUIRE LOGISTICIANS WHOSE OUTLOOK IS BROAD AND WHO CAN ACCOMPLISH TASKS QUICKLY AND WITHOUT FANFARE. THESE TWO OFFICERS, WORKING WITH THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNSELOR, MUST BE THE ONES WHO LOCATE AND ARRANGE HOUSING, SET UP OFFICE SPACE, PROCURE VEHICLES, RECRUIT LOCAL STAFF, ESTABLISH COMMUNICATIONS LINKS, AND THE HUNDRED-AND-ONE THINGS THAT MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED BEFORE THE INFLUX OF OTHER STAFF AND TECHNICIANS. WE AGAIN POINT OUT THAT NONE OF THESE AMENITIES (EXCEPT FOR SOME LIMITED OFFICE SPACE FOR THE US COORDINATOR AND HIS DEPUTY) ARE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE IN RIYADH. WE SUGGEST THAT THE INITIAL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF PLAN TO HAVE THEIR FAMILIES FOLLOW AFTER HOUSING OBTAINED AND FURNISHED. THIS COULD EXTEND OVER SEVERAL MONTHS SO SEPARATE MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCES SHOULD BE AUTHORIZED.

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6. ADDITIONAL US PERSONNEL TO PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICING WILL EVENTUALLY BE REQUIRED, BUT NEITHER WE NOR THE SAUDIS WANT TOO MANY PEOPLE DESCENDING ALL AT ONE TIME BEFORE BASIC FACILITIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS ARE UNDERWAY. WITH ARRIVAL OF CONTROLLER, TWO EXECUTIVE OFFICERS (ONE OF WHOM SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH AID PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES), AND LOCAL REQUIREMENT OF ONE OR TWO AMERICAN SECRETARIES PLUS SERVICES OF ADMINISTRATIVE COUNSELOR AND OTHERS IN EMBASSY ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION, WE CAN HANDLE THE INITIAL START-UP AT SUFFICIENTLY FAST TEMPO. (SAUDIS DESIRE MAXIMUM USE OF THEIR OWN SECONDED GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES FOR UPGRADING THEIR JOB SKILLS AND TO OBTAIN ON-THE -JOB TRAINING IN U.S. MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES, AS WELL AS USE OF CONTRACTORS FOR HOUSING/MAINTENANCE, BUT STAFF BUILD-UP WILL REQUIRE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF SOME AMERICANS. AGAIN, EMBASSY UMBRELLA WILL FACILITATE ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH INDIVIDUALS.)

7. PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS MENTIONED ABOVE ARE OUTSIDE OF PROPOSED STAFFING FOR THE LIAISON OFFICE IN RIYADH WHICH HAS BEEN SUBJECT PREVIOUS COMMUNICATION. JOINT COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF NEED NOT BE, AND PROBABLY SHOULD NOT BE, PART OF EMBASSY, BUT SHOULD HAVE RELATIONSHIPS SIMILAR TO AID PERSONNEL SERVING ABROAD AT FOREIGN SERVICE POSTS. NEVERTHELESS, OPERATING PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY FLEXIBLE SO THAT SERVICES RENDERED BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNSELOR AND HIS EMBASSY STAFF TO JOINT COMMISSION ARE PROPERLY REIMBURSED UNDER NORMAL SHARED ADMINISTRATIVE AGREEMENT ARRANGEMENTS.

8. EMBASSY DESIRES TO FOLLOW AID PRACTICE OF HAVING ALL PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS CLEARED AND APPROVED BY POST AT TIME OF NOMINATION BY WASHINGTON. THIS RESPONSIBILITY WILL BE ASSUMED BY U.S. COORDINATOR AFTER HIS ARRIVAL. THEREFORE, NAMES OF CANDIDATES SELECTED FOR ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM SHOULD BE FURNISHED EMBASSY AS SOON AS FEASIBLE.

9. AFTER UPCOMING MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON OF US-SAUDI JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION FEBRUARY 26-27, AMBASSADOR DESIRES THAT AFOREMENTIONED ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT ARRANGEMENT UTILIZING EXISTING EMBASSY PERSONNEL, WITH

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ADDITIONS AS WILL BE NEEDED, BE DISCUSSED THOROUGHLY
WITH ECONOMIC COUNSELOR WHILE HE IS IN WASHINGTON.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC COOPERATION, AGREEMENTS, COMMITTEES, ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975JIDDA01312
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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From: JIDDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750219/aaaaaqzt.tel
Line Count: 226
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 MAY 2003 by RuthemTJ>; APPROVED <14 JAN 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICING OF JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION SUMMARY: EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICING
TAGS: EAID, AFSP, US, SA, USSAEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006